It was remarked in the last Administration Report that the correctness of the average assessment which was given as Rs. 2-7-2 per acre of wet land was open to doubt. From statistics collected in regard to six of the settled taluks it is observed that the average per acre of Pandarapattom or Sirkar lands varies from Rs. 21–as. 2 in Tovala and Rs. 19–as. 9 in Agastisvaram to Rs. 3–as. 12 in Nedumangad and Rs. 3–as. 10 in Kartigapally. The average for all the six taluks taken together is Rs. 8–as. 8 per acre. It will thus be seen that the incidence of taxation in Travancore is not so light as is generally believed to be the case. These figures relate only to the six settled taluks for which the information is available and a correct average can be obtained only when the whole State is settled.

The aggregate receipts under Land Revenue amounted to Rs. 22,99,320 and the expenditure to Rs. 7,16,113 against Rs. 23,88,994 and Rs. 6,51,602 respectively in 1079.

Of the 30,684 puduval cases, 11,165 cases or 36 per cent were disposed of, while the disposals under escheat and other revenue cases numbered 757 out of 2,547 or 29 per cent. There were 1,855 and 578 cases under the Poramboke and Land Acquisition Regulations of which 1,763 and 474 or 95 and 82 per cent respectively were disposed of. Out of 21,623 cases of transfer of registry, 15,797 cases or 73 per cent were disposed of.

145 appeals from the decisions of the Peishkars in revenue cases were heard and disposed of by the Dewan during the year, 5 of them having been remanded for further enquiry.

In view of the failure of crops on account of the drought which prevailed the ryots of some of the taluks were permitted, as a measure of relief, to pay the paddy portion of the tax at the favourable rate of 10 chs. per parah.

The question of converting the grain tax on wet lands into money tax which was brought forward at the last meeting of this Assembly has undergone considerable discussion during the year and every effort is being made to arrive at a satisfactory solution as early as circumstances would permit.

3. **Survey.**—The boundary demarcation and survey of Kondur Proverty in Meenachil Taluk, an area of 127 square miles, was done during the year, thus completing the process of cadastral survey of all the 31 taluks of the State. The field survey of all the 31 taluks but one village has also been completed. Village maps of Muvattupula and Todupula were lithographed.

Survey School.—65 Government employés and 132 private students passed out of the Survey School during the year. The school is doing useful work in supplying trained men for work in the Land Revenue Department.

4. **Revenue Settlement.**—Last year I gave you the outlines of the new scheme that had been sanctioned by His Highness for bringing settlement operations which had been unnecessarily protracted and had cost the State an enormous amount of money to a speedy and satisfactory close. You will be gratified to hear that the anticipations formed last year have to a very great extent been realized. The experience gained during the past year has brought to light many irregularities of procedure and heavy arrears of work during the preliminary stages which had not been taken into account when the forecast was framed in September 1904. But these will be considered when a revised forecast now under preparation is adopted. It is believed that, on the

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whole the original estimate will not be appreciably exceeded either in point of time or cost. To make the subject clear I will at the risk of repeating what was said last year explain that the object of the new scheme is to secure expedition and economy by simplification of work and throwing greater responsibility on the Assistants in charge of Parties. When the Revenue Surve and Settlement was started in 1883 it was estimated that the whole work would be completed in 9 years at a cost of 15 lakhs of rupees. But after the lapse of 21 years it was found that though nearly 49 lakhs of rupees had been spent during the period, no taluk had been settled in the proper sense of the term and the head of the department had estimated that the work would take another 20 years and cost another 45 lakhs. After considerable discussion and elaborate enquiry into the causes which contributed to this delay and excessive cost it was resolved that the methods of work which were cumbrous and complicated should be simplified, that the department should be relieved of many items of work which did not properly fall within its sphere but which it had burdened itself with, and that the constitution of the department should be revised so as to enable it to work directly towards the goal and complete the special work for which it had been created within a reasonable time. It was found that the Settlement Department had undertaken the almost impossible task of clearing away the accumulated annual jamabundy work of a hundred years and much of their time was taken up in elaborate enquiries into titles and levying of fines known as vilayartham on escheat and viruthi or service inam lands. All this was found to be an undoubted source of oppression and harassment besides being the cause of protracting settlement work indefinitely.

The prominent feature of the new scheme is the simplified procedure adopted for conducting registration enquiries. Instead of entrusting such enquiries to low-paid classifiers who sat in their offices at the Taluk headquarters, summoned parties to produce witnesses and documents, adjourned cases to suit their own convenience, discussed questions of law and evidence and wrote elaborate decisions arrogating to themselves the functions of judicial tribunals, the new scheme requires that the work shall be done in the pagudis or villages by responsible officers within a specified time, and they are instructed to take the tandaper registry, possession and payment of tax as sufficient guides in deciding as to who shall get a pattah for a particular field. The elaborate system of appeals from such decisions through the various grades of officials and going up to the Dewan has been dispensed with. Pattahs are after all not evidence of title but only show who is to be held liable for Government tax on a particular survey number. A general power of revision is however vested in the superior officers of the department under which they can rectify on the spot any errors or irregularities which may come to their notice.

Enquiries into escheat and viruthi cases, which had hampered the work of the Settlement department, were transferred to the Revenue department and the procedure in these enquiries was much simplified. Vilayartham or fines also which were excessive, being sometimes as high as 40 times the assessment, and were levied whether the lands were in the original family or in the hands of alienees and led to lands long held in the family being in some cases surrendered to Government, were reduced to 5 and 10 times the assessment according to length of possession, the lands being confirmed to present holders without any fines if the properties were in the families of the original grantees.

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The procedure in respect of disposal of darkhasts for Government lands which are known as "Puduval" in Travancore has also been simplified. The system of levying arrears of assessment on puduvals for 10 and 12 years and also acreage value was a source of hardship and annoyance and was replaced by the levy of a price for the land not exceeding 5 years' assessment. The registry of porambokes which required constant references to the Revenue department from the Settlement department was transferred to the Revenue department.

A thorough re-organization of the department was a necessary preliminary to the introduction of the new system of work and was accordingly sanctioned.

These are the main features of the scheme. Though the scheme was introduced on the 1st Vrichigom 1080 (16th November 1904), the re-organization of the Department under the new scheme and the preliminaries connected with the issue of notifications under the new rules for the commencement of registration enquiries took up fully 5 months and hence the practical working of the scheme dates only from the 1st Medom 1080 (13th April 1904).

In the four months of the year during which registration enquiries were conducted under the new system 2,22,915 survey numbers were disposed of by the registering officers against a total of 8,34,687 numbers disposed of under the old system in periods varying from 3 to 14 years. The outturn of work during these 4 months was equal to what was shown for 4 years and more under the old system. The comparison is too striking to need any comment. It is gratifying to note that 82 per cent of the total quantity of work under this head which remained when the scheme was started was finished within the close of the year and the progress since made shows that the balance now on hand is only 3 per cent. Out of 188 pagudis in the 15 taluks under settlement this work was wholly completed in 153 pagudis and 20 more have been completed during the current year. Applications for revision numbered only 259 or ·2 per cent of the total number of cases disposed of by the registering officers. These figures ought to go to dispel the fears entertained when the new scheme was passed by His Highness that the work was more than could be completed within the very limited time fixed and that even if completed the quality would be inferior.

In addition to registration work assessment work was also done by the new registering officers. 58 villages were ready for this item of work and they were taken up and 81 per cent of the work done when the year closed. These results are satisfactory and reflect credit on the officers concerned. Government are aware that in regard to the fixing of rates for cocoanut trees there are complaints in some taluks but the Settlement Peishkar will thoroughly scrutinize the rates and hear the complaints of the ryots before the rates are sanctioned.

Although the main points in the scheme have thus been given effect to and the results attained have greatly justified the expectations, there are still several difficulties in carrying out the scheme successfully and completing the whole work within the time fixed. In the first place the forecast given in the scheme for the completion of work in the several taluks was based on certain data furnished at the time by the Settlement department with reference to the balance of work under various heads. It was then assumed

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on the strength of these data that certain stages of work had been gone through and that a certain proportion of the work under each head had been completed under the old system. But on actual examination of the work in the several taluks it has turned out that the balances of work are much heavier than they were shown to be at the time the scheme was framed and that much of the work under various stages which was shown to have been done had not really been even taken up in respect of hundreds of survey numbers. Arrears of this kind are being still discovered from time to time as the work advances and even now it has not been possible to ascertain exactly what the arrears are in each taluk. This is due to the irregular and unmethodical way in which work was conducted under the old system. All the processes connected with settlement were started almost simultaneously. The preliminary stage of preparing classification registers was not completed before registration and assessment work was taken up and work may be still in the initial stages in certain portions of taluks and even villages when chittahs and rough pattahs would be put in hand and even fair pattahs actually issued. This was not confined to one or two taluks but was extended over nearly 15 taluks in the State. As a consequence it is now found that even in a taluk like Neyyattinkara which was shown as settled 4 years ago and which had on that account been omitted from the forecast, there were balances of work under such preliminary stages as classification, sub-division, registration and assessment in respect of several fields. Such a state of things could not but vitiate the forecast framed and retard progress. Strenuous efforts had to be made by the Settlement Peishkar to bring up the arrears under some items within the short time, 5 months, that he had before him before the commencement of registration enquiries under the new scheme. The following figures give some idea as to the real state of the arrears and the quantity of work that had to be done under preliminary stages. These were discovered by the newly re-organized staff and were not shown in the statements furnished when the new scheme was framed.

	Balance on 1st Vrichigom 1080. 16th November 1904.	Disposed of from Vrichigom to Karkadagom 1080— 16th November 1904 to 15th August 1905.
	Survey Nos.	Survey Nos.
1. Writing of Olugu Form	3,86,289	86,880
2. Verification of Survey Nos. in the field with Olugu forms	9,319	7,924
3. Sub-division work.	2,24,078	40,176
4. Survey Nos. for counting of trees	1,85,206	92,694
5. Posting of entries in the classification register	9,28,346	1,99,391
6. Preparation of Theerchaperedu	7,22,190	3,97,405

The items of work above shown are by no means exhaustive. There are several minor items under which also balances remained and had to be cleared and this work took away a good portion of the time of the field establishment.

The confusion in which matters were found to be when work was resumed under the new scheme and the absence of correct data as to the state of the arrears have already retarded the realisation of the expectations formed when the scheme was framed. The taluks of Shencotta and Vilavancode were expected to be settled by the end of 1080 (15th August 1905) and the registers of Quilon, Karunagapalli, Ambalapula

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and Neyyattinkara were also to be completed during the year. But these results have not yet been attained although the Peishkar and his subordinates were unremitting in their efforts to push on with the work. As already observed there was some unavoidable delay in commencing the work under the new scheme. But there are also other causes for the delay which are now engaging the attention of Government. There is still a tendency in the Department to relapse into the old methods of working, avoiding working in the field and doing all work from head offices by carrying on correspondence with the subordinates. This is against the spirit of the new scheme. I hope to be able to inspect the work in the field more largely than I have done hitherto in view to ensure strict adherence to the instructions laid down in the scheme. It is also in contemplation to frame a revised forecast in the light of the experience gained during the past year. The Settlement Peishkar is now engaged in this work and every endeavour will be made to introduce such modifications as may be necessary to secure the early completion of Settlement work under the scheme.

Very good progress was made in the printing of the Settlement Registers during the year. The registers for Trivandrum, Chirayinkil and Nedumangad taluks had been printed and those of Kartigapalli put on hand when the year closed. This is also due to the special efforts put forth in this direction under the new scheme and the Trivandrum taluk which was settled 17 years ago is now furnished with printed registers ready for reference.

In connection with the work of viruthi settlement under the new scheme the question of assigning lands for Munnila service and for collection of vital statistics came up for consideration. As the system was found to be a source of hardship to the service inam holders and much inconvenience to Government it was abolished during the year and orders issued for the employment of a stipendiary staff, the lands being enfranchised on full pattom.

5. **Legislation.**—During the last year four Regulations were passed.

I. To make provision for the care of the person and estates of Lunatics.

II. To amend Regulations I of 1040 and II of 1052 relating to Breaches of Contract.

III. To prevent loss to Government by the default or misconduct of Public Accountants.

IV. To consolidate and amend the Law relating to Stamps.

Bills to consolidate and amend the law relating to Revenue Officers and the Land Revenue, and to amend the Code of Criminal Procedure were introduced during the year, and leave was granted to introduce Bills to amend the law relating to Civil Courts and the High Court Regulations.

6. **Police.**—The strength of the Police was 1,728 men. The proportion of policemen to area and population was 1 to 5·004 square miles and 1 to 2,083 of the population respectively. The number of cognizable cases registered during the year was 4,494, of which 1,761 were referred as false. Of the 2,663 cases charged 2,117 ended in conviction. It is satisfactory to note that the percentage of property recovered, 57·3, shows an increase over that of the previous year, 48·7.

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